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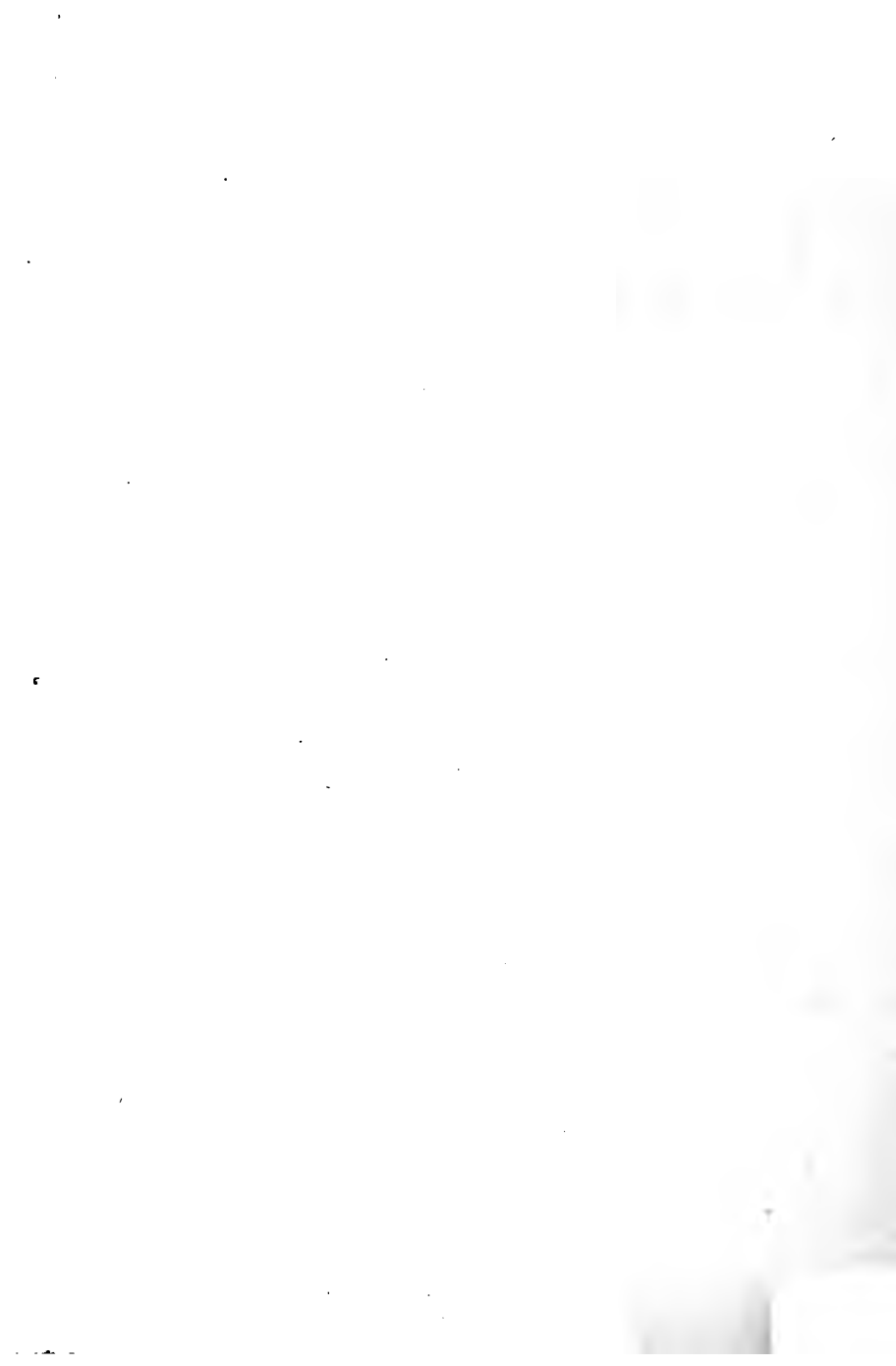
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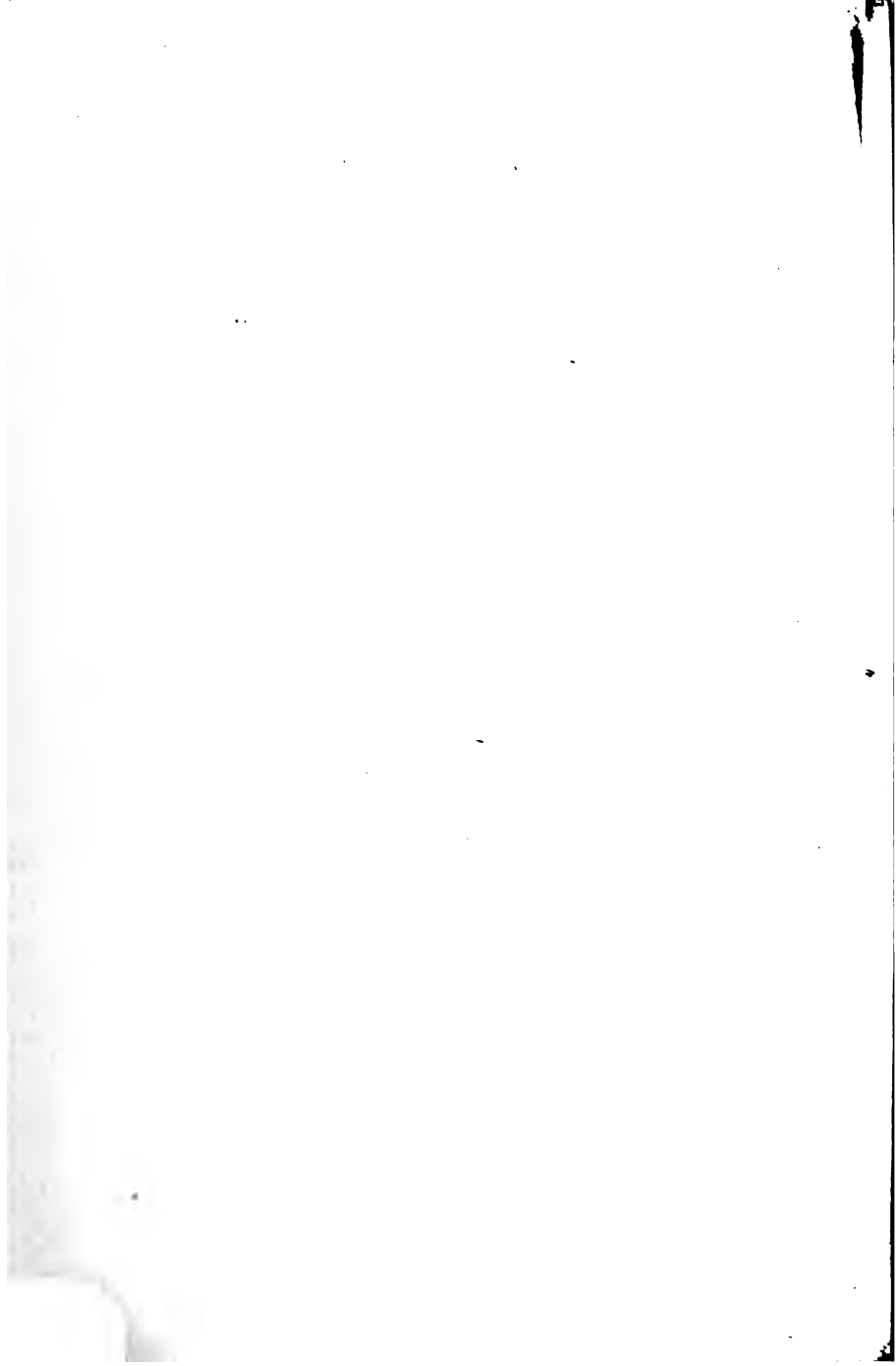
Lelia W. Prince

Rockland M.C. Company

Apr. 1885







GLIMPSES
INTO
CHINESE HOMES.

BY
ELIZABETH U. YATES.

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Yates, Elizabeth U.

Glimpses into Chinese homes

To My Father,

WHOSE PRAYERS

HAVE EVER BEEN MY STRENGTH

AND INSPIRATION,

This Volume

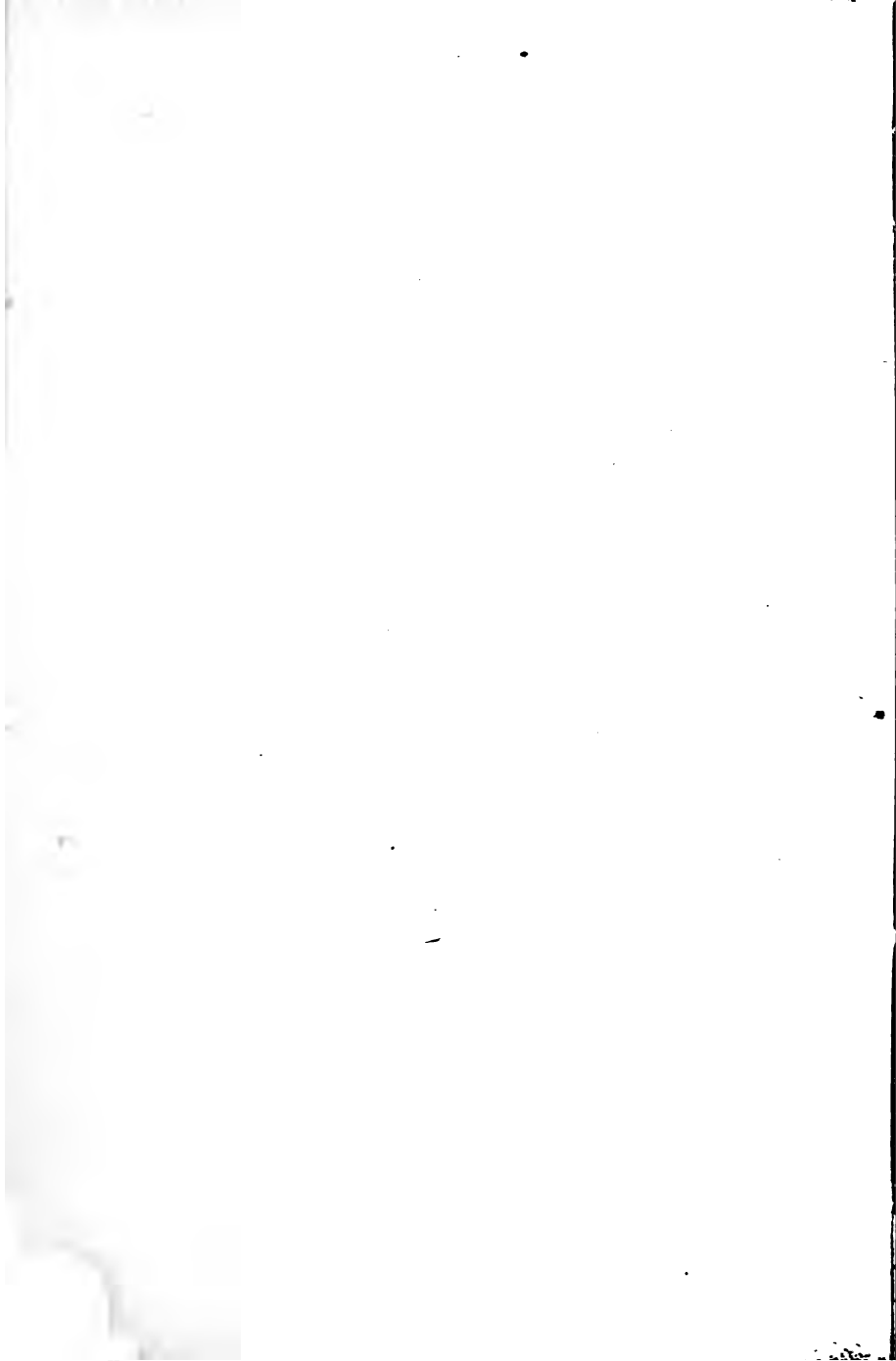
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

PREFACE.

The Chinese provinces comprise an area of nearly two million square miles, embracing every variety of climate, from the bleak cold of New England to the oppressive heat of Mexico. The mode of life and habits of the people naturally vary greatly in so vast a country. Many facts may be stated of one section that do not exist in other parts of the Empire. The following sketches represent the mode of life and habits of the people in Peking and the adjacent region, as seen during several years of personal observation and experience.

E. U. Y.

Round Pond, Maine.



GLIMPSSES INTO CHINESE HOMES.

CHAPTER I.

BOAT LIFE.

LET us look into the homes of China, and thus shall we learn of the hearts of its people, for the home is the mirror of the heart. The passions, tastes and imaginations of the soul are all portrayed in the abiding-place of the body. Chinese character, politics, religions and social customs, are all shown in its domestic relations.

And, indeed, is not the home, anywhere, an epitome of national life, its institutions and sentiments? Inasmuch as we understand the determinate quantity of family life, insomuch do we know the trend of national existence.

Rome, in the zenith of her power, governed but one hundred and twenty millions of men. The boy Emperor of China sways his sceptre over three times that number. What roofs cover these hearts? Under what conditions are they abiding?

Hundreds of thousands are born, live, and die on boats. By far the greatest portion of this class of people is found in the southern part of the Empire. The waters about Canton are the most densely populated; yet this style of living prevails, to some extent, in all latitudes of the country.

The best class of house-boats are about seventy-five feet in length, and fifteen feet in width. Such boats are divided into three rooms, consisting of a small ante-room, a large room in the centre, and a bedroom in the stern. They are made very comfortable and convenient, from a Chinese standpoint. But this size and style of boats are, by no means, the most numerous. The waterways

and harbors are crowded with little crafts, from twenty to thirty feet in length, containing but a single room, roofed with straw matting.

House-boats are under the supervision of water police, who grant them a location. Many of them are permanently moored. When they become unseaworthy, they are sometimes lodged upon the bank, and still used as residences.

A Dominican Friar, in 1830, described boat-life to a correspondent in the following quaint and graphic language:

“The realm of Cathay is peopled passing well * * * * * There be many great sheets of water throughout the Empire; insomuch that a good half of the realm and its territory is under water. And on these waters dwell great multitudes of people, because of the vast population there is in the said realm. They build wooden houses upon boats, and so their houses go up and down upon the waters, and

the people go trafficking in their houses, from one province to another, whilst they dwell in their houses with all their families, with their wives and their children, and all their household utensils and necessaries. And so they live upon the water all the days of their lives."

These cities on the sea are crowded with the most degraded class of the people. Filth and squalor, vice and vermin, sin and wretchedness in every form exist among them. The feet of these women are never bound, and they perform the most of the work. Many a mother may be seen with a baby strapped to her back, propelling one of these wretched crafts, while other miserable little ones tug at her dress; and the father, drunk with opium, dreams of broad acres and fair domains in the little cabin, so small that he cannot stand erect, or stretch his limbs in the limited space.

Thousands of innocent children are yearly born into this life. From their mother's lips they learn to lisp the vilest obscenity; and

curses, base and terrible, fall upon their ears at the first recognition of their father's voice. The vituperation and pollution that they utter, these accents of degradation, are an index of their condition and need.

CHAPTER II.

HOMES OF POOR AND RICH.

A suggestion of tents has been remarked in the one story buildings that everywhere prevail in Chinese architecture; but in the habits of the people there are no nomadic tendencies. Successive generations of one family live in the same house and cultivate the inherited acres. Sons and sons' sons bring home their brides to these patriarchal estates, and an additional room makes another home. Thus several generations dwell together in the same court, though it can hardly be said they all live under the same roof.

Temples, palaces, and hovels are all similar in design. The general style of buildings is one story, with slightly concave roof, and overhanging eaves. Various reasons have been assigned for the simplicity and the uniformity of design. It is sometimes attributed

to the absence of beautiful and imposing models, and to ignorance of mechanical principles. But the chief reason is "the inertness of the imaginative faculty in the Chinese mind."

In the country the majority of the houses are built either of mud and straw or adobe. In the cities burnt brick of grayish slate-color is the principal building material.

An isolated farm house is seldom seen, even in the far interior. Their houses are located in hamlets, thereby affording mutual protection and social advantages. The closely packed villages, in even sparsely settled regions, afford excellent opportunity for the prosecution of mission work.

The majority of the people live in hovels. A single room accommodates a family. It is often shared with pigs and chickens if the family are rich enough to have such property. These homes have earth or brick floors, and paper windows. In the northern part of the

Empire every Chinese living room has a brick platform termed *k'ang*, built across one side. These structures are about two feet high and six feet wide. They are covered with straw matting manufactured for the purpose. They serve as a bedstead at night, and the family sit, upon them during the day, *à la* Turk, and take their meals from a small, low table placed thereon. A large open kettle is set in the bricks at one end, where the food is cooked. The heat and smoke from the fire pass through a flue in the platform into the chimney. This arrangement makes a very warm and comfortable bed in winter, but an extremely hot and uncomfortable one in summer, as there is no other outlet for the heat, and the stove must be used whenever food is prepared.

The furniture of the homes of the poor consists of a table, chair, bench or two, a few cooking utensils, bowls, cups and chopsticks.

In such apartments, amid dampness, smoke and vermin, the most of the people live. Some-

times a flowering pot, or imitation in tawdry tinselry, is seen in these hovels, indicating, pitifully, a taste for and an appreciation of the beautiful.

But the poorest have their gods, which are mounted conspicuously in hovels and palaces. The poor coolie, with a family to support on eighteen cents a day, the average wage of a common laborer, burns incense with unremitting faithfulness.

A somewhat better class of dwelling is built around a court, into which the rooms open. The room on the side opposite the street entrance contains the family gods and ancestral tablets, and is also used as a general reception room.

The homes of the wealthy are built in extensive enclosures, and are adorned with elaborate carving and gay painting. Two tutelary gods, in the form of grotesque pictures, are posted upon the double doors of the main entrance. Upon the sides and lintel

are signs of official rank, and felicitous mottoes, and over the doorway hangs a paper lantern, upon which is printed the name and office of the proprietor. The street gate opens into a small court containing the porter's lodge, and other small rooms. An intricate labyrinth through several corridors and courts leads to the apartments occupied by the family. The courts and gardens which adorn the premises are rendered beautiful and picturesque by artificial ponds, flowering shrubs, dwarfed trees, and vine-covered grottos.

At the head of the large central court is the family hall. On a high table, before the ancestral tablets and idols, are incense urns, and other utensils of worship.

In the homes of the wealthy the food is prepared in a kitchen in the rear, and served in the living rooms where the family sleep.

The furnishing of this class of houses is expensive, and sometimes unique and beautiful. The divan is screened by silk draperies.

Ebony chairs, pearl inlaid tables, finely carved cabinets with expensive ornaments of jade, cloisenné, and crystal, and many other fine articles of furniture, give an air of wealth and luxury to the rooms.

But, notwithstanding the evident display of wealth, to the eye of the foreigner there is always a conspicuous lack of comfort in Chinese palaces. No carpets give warmth or beauty to the brick or marble floors. The straight-back, narrow-seat chairs, with small tables between them, used in serving tea, are arranged with tedious exactness against the walls. The overhanging eaves and closely adjoining buildings shut out sunshine, and the unventilated rooms are permeated with the odor of incense to "lords many, and gods many."

This style of living is common among the wealthy private citizens and high officials.

CHAPTER III.

ROYAL PALACES.

But what of the mode of living and style of furnishing in homes of Royalty? Upon what does his Majesty recline? Like unto what is his chair of state? What are the surroundings of the Empress-Dowager?

No foreign foot may now press the sacred precincts of the Dragon Throne. Our curiosity must be satisfied with the accounts of the common people who have been privileged to serve in the Imperial court, the records of the Jesuit priests during their period of royal favor, and the reports of the meagre courtesies of hospitality bestowed by Chinese Emperors upon foreign diplomates who have been granted audience with the Most Illustrious Ruler. All that can be ascertained from these sources in regard to the architecture of the palaces, and style of living at Chinese court,

has been carefully collected and published in Dr. Williams' "Middle Kingdom." The following statements are made on that authority:

The Prohibited City, where the palaces are located is situated in the heart of Peking. It is about two miles and a half in circuit, and is rendered secluded and secure by a wall and moat around it. It is also surrounded, and separated from the common life of the great capital, by the Imperial City, which is rectangular, and about six miles in circuit. The Imperial City contains palaces of high officials, and temples with extensive and beautiful gardens. This city is also enclosed by a wall, the gates of which are always open, and foreign and native residents of Peking have free access. The walls of these cities are not as high as the wall around Peking, from the top of which a good view can be obtained of the yellow tiled roofs of the royal palaces, and those tiled in green, which indicates secondary

rank. "You would think them all made of, or at least covered with, pure gold, enamelled in azure and green, so that the spectacle is at once majestic and charming."

Gates on the east and west of the Prohibited City give entrance to the residence of the Emperor, and the apartments occupied by the guards defending the Dragon Throne of the Son of Heaven. The suites of courts and halls within are the most superb architectural structures the Empire affords. According to the ideas of the royal residents, who are not disturbed by any knowledge of the outside world, and the notions of the common people, who have never entered and have only the data furnished by their imaginations, they are unsurpassed and unequalled on the whole earth.

Troops are stationed from the outer gate to the central division—in which the Imperial buildings are—a distance of half a mile. A bell in the tower over the gateway leading to

the Imperial court is struck every time the Emperor passes beneath it. This gateway opens into a large, marble-paved court, connected by richly ornamented marble bridges with the inner marble court.

The "Hall of Highest Peace" is situated at the head of this court. This magnificent marble building is approached by five flights of stairs. There is a throne in the midst of this superb and immense hall where the Emperor sits and receives the homage of his courtiers on state occasions. They here acknowledge the supremacy of the Son of Heaven by the ceremony of prostration before him.

Beyond this building is the "Hall of Central Peace." It has a circular roof supported by columns arranged in the form of a square. The Emperor resorts to this unique hall to examine the prayers that have been prepared to be offered on the occasions of the worship of Heaven and Earth at the summer

and winter solstices, in accordance with the state religion; the observance of which is confined to the Emperor and his courtiers.

Next to this building is the many-pillared "Hall of Secure Peace," built upon a high marble terrace. In this hall the Emperor bestows degrees upon the successful competitors for the literary honors of the triennial examinations at Peking. From the court containing this hall a flight of stairs and gateway lead to the "Palace of Heavenly Purity." This most splendid palace can only be entered by especial permission. Here the August Lofty One holds early morning audiences with his ministers.

There are records of two unique and interesting feasts which transpired in this hall. Kanghi, having reached his sixtieth year in 1722, celebrated the event by a banquet for all the men in the Empire over sixty years of age. A similar reception was given by his grandson, Kienlung, in 1785, when, it is said, the guests numbered over three thousand.

Beyond this hall stands the "Palace of Earth's Repose," which is the residence of the Imperial Harem. Beautiful gardens surround these quarters. Flowers, groves and lakes furnish agreeable diversion and delightful variety to the monotonous, weary lives of the unfortunate inmates, of whom there are an unlimited number.

In the eastern division is the "Hall of Intense Thought," where Confucius and other sages are worshipped. Near this hall, sacred to the memory of their great philosophers, appropriately stands the Library. The catalogue of the Imperial library comprises one hundred and twelve volumes, and contains the names of over seventy-five thousand books. Among their renowned works the classics of Confucius are the most highly esteemed by the Chinese, and the most celebrated abroad.

One of the most remarkable works of the collection is the dictionary of the Emperor

Kanghi. This work was planned and prepared under his personal supervision. Seventy-six of the most distinguished literati of the Empire were employed upon it for eight years. During that time the Emperor devoted the leisure hours of every day to reviewing their labors. It was finished in 1711, and published in one hundred and thirty large volumes. Considering the peculiar nature of the Chinese language, this work deserves to rank among the most gigantic intellectual tasks ever performed. Four thousand centuries of Chinese history are recorded in the Imperial library, forming an extraordinary accumulation of literature.

The eastern division also contains a temple, in which the Emperor and his family sacrifice and worship before the ancestral tablets.

The Prohibited City contains many other edifices for public and private purposes. It is said, for lack of care and cleanliness, that the royal palaces and premises are despoiled of much of their beauty and grandeur.

The Chinese government is now under the control of the Manchus, who took possession of it in 1644. The conquest of the United States by Canada would furnish a similar situation. Although the Manchus are of the same race as the Chinese, their customs differ somewhat. The distinctions might pass unnoticed by persons not familiar with the country, but they are maintained very tenaciously by both classes.

A popular misapprehension prevails that the higher the social position of the women of China, the smaller their feet. This theory may only be applied to the aristocracy of the South. All the ladies of the royal family have natural feet. No Manchu woman has bound feet. They also have more social liberty than the Chinese. They go about the streets of Peking freely, and their example gives a tone of freedom to society, so that Chinese women are more frequently seen upon the streets of Peking than in any other part of the Empire.

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followed, very shortly, by his young wife. The occasion of her death is uncertain. The most popular rumor concerning it is, that she died of grief; it is also reported that she committed suicide, in accordance with a command of the Empress-Dowager.

A new Emperor was chosen by the Imperial council. According to Chinese ideas he must not be of an older generation than his predecessor. Several uncles living, in the neighborhood, but a cousin, about the same years of age, was selected in honor. The Emperor was not more than 15 years of age. The Empress Dowager had been a concubine of the late Emperor. She had been a favorite of the late Emperor, and she had been a favorite of the late Emperor. It is reported that she died of grief, and the

The Manchus and Chinese are averse to intermarrying, but such alliances sometimes occur.

The Chinese cue dates from their conquest by the Manchus. It was required as a sign of subjection, on penalty of death. It has, however, become a cherished fashion, and the Chinese are now very proud of their long braided hair.

The Emperor Hien Feng, who died in 1861, or ascended the Dragon Throne above, as the Chinese express the fact of the death of a Ruler, left a son six years of age, who succeeded him to the throne. This nominal Ruler was placed under the guardianship of the two Empresses—the Empress-Dowager, first wife of the deceased monarch, and Empress An, mother of the boy Emperor. In 1872 the young Ruler was married to the daughter of a distinguished official, who was selected by the Empresses. Two years later the Emperor died of small-pox. He was

followed, very shortly, by his young wife. The occasion of her death is uncertain. The most popular rumor concerning it is, that she died of grief; it is also reported that she committed suicide, in accordance with a command of the Empress-Dowager.

A new Emperor was chosen by the Imperial council. According to Chinese ideas he must not be of an older generation than his predecessor. There were several uncles living, in the maturity of manhood, but a cousin, about three and a half years of age, was selected to receive the honor. The present Emperor was born August 15, 1871. The guardianship of the Empresses was extended to him. His authority has been only nominal until his recent ascension to power.

Since the death of the Emperor Hien Feng, in 1861, the great Empire of China has been practically under the regency of women. It is stated that the Empress of the East, who died in 1881, often exercised despotic sway, and the

highest ministers of state have been compelled to yield to her authority. The Emperor himself was obliged to yield her the highest homage by performing the ceremony of nine prostrations before her on stated occasions.

The various departments of the court are under a board of directors. They attend upon the sacrifices and superintend the household. The internal arrangements are conducted with much ceremony and system. Elaborate etiquette controls all official intercourse.

In the *Hwui Tien*, a Chinese work containing descriptions of life at court, the *menus* of the Emperor and Empress are thus recorded: "There shall daily be placed before the Emperor thirty pounds of meat in a basin, and seven pounds boiled in soup; hog's fat and butter, of each one and one-third pound; two sheep, two fowls, and two ducks, the milk of eighty cows, and seventy-five parcels of tea. Her Majesty receives twenty-two pounds of

meat in platters, and thirteen pounds boiled with vegetables; one fowl, one duck, twelve pitchers of water, the milk of twenty-five cows, and ten parcels of tea."

This extraordinary bill of fare can hardly be regarded as trustworthy, for the Chinese do not eat butter or milk.

The inmates of the royal palaces are so secluded that but little information can be obtained concerning their mode of life. In their conservatism and conceit they shut themselves in from the barbaric world, and regard their effete institutions and false religions with complacency and satisfaction.

CHAPTER IV.

A MERCHANT'S FAMILY.

From a general survey of the homes of various classes let us turn, to view specific phases of life among them.

We wend our way through the narrow streets, amid the odors deadly, sickening, through the rubbish, deep and high, past groups of ragged children, who laugh and play in childish glee as genuine as that of the young American, until we reach the door of a retail grain store of a respectable merchant.

This shop is about twenty feet long and fifteen feet wide. The proprietor stands at a small counter in one corner, and the limited space is nearly filled by barrels containing various kinds of grain and flour. In the rear is a small building, separated from the shop by a narrow court, where a donkey turns the millstone which converts the grains into meal

and flour for the market. On the right side of the shop a door opens into the home of the trader and his family. They are well-to-do people, from a Chinese standpoint. They do not find it "difficult to pass the days," which is their idiom for "make both ends meet." Yet, they think very narrow quarters sufficient for them, and make themselves comfortable under circumstances that we could not endure.

The father, mother and three daughters live in one room, twenty feet long, and ten feet wide. The brick platform extends across one side, upon which they sleep at night and sit during the day. On one side of the room are several rude chests, piled one upon the other, containing extra wearing apparel, and other articles not in daily use. In the kettle, set in the bricks at one end of the platform, dumplings, flavored richly with garlic, are boiling. A paper window lets in the light from the small back court. There is no ceiling, and the cob-

webs hang in thick festoons from the rafters, black with the fumes and smoke of generations. Divers sorts of rubbish are tucked here and there in nooks and crevices.

Not a very cleanly or cheerful apartment surely! But, nevertheless, an attractive place to us, because of the warm welcome we always received there.

As soon as we are seen on the street, the shouts of the children announce our coming, and the mother, with her dusky countenance lighted by sunny smiles, comes to the door to welcome us. A quilt, not wholly new, or entirely clean, is quickly spread upon the platform for us to sit upon. A singing book, which was given them at a previous visit, is immediately ferreted out from the rubbish in a corner.

“O, let us sing, now!” they exclaim.

“What do you wish to sing?” we ask.

“I am so glad that Jesus loves me!” they answer.

Our standard hymns and gospel songs have

been translated into Chinese, and they are very much enjoyed and appreciated by the natives.

As our voices mingle in this hymn, the sound reaches the street. A crowd of women and children immediately flock in to hear the music. After singing a few verses we proceed to explain the meaning, and endeavor to impress their minds with the fact that to them "is the word of this salvation sent."

The customers pause amid their barter for the bread which perisheth, to hear of God's provision for their spiritual needs. A man of letters among them, whose eyes have grown dim with constant poring over the classics of Confucius, approaches us. Bowing low, and removing his huge spectacles, which is equivalent to the politeness and respect implied in raising the hat among us, he asks for a copy of the book containing the new strange doctrines we teach. We give him a simple arrangement of scriptural truths in the form

of a catechism. He reads the characters without hesitation, but he has no comprehension of the meaning, though learned in the native schools of ethics and philosophy. "For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."

Quite a large class of children are taught in this home every day, and we proceed to hear their lessons. .

Bright little girls are they. Although the mental culture of the native schools is limited to men, nature is impartial, and the daughters share equally with the sons in an inheritance of mental gifts. Notwithstanding the fact that, with very few exceptions, the women of China are found with minds wholly untutored, when opportunity is afforded for their development they show the same extraordinary strength of memory and wonderful powers of acquisition that characterize the men of their race.

The eldest daughter of this family is about fifteen years of age.

“I want to finish my book this week,” she says; “I am going away.”

She then drops her eyes in bashful confusion, and her mother explains that her daughter is about to be married. Next week the mother will take her to the home of her husband's family, in a distant province, where the ceremony will transpire.

Betrothals among the Chinese are arranged by the parents or guardians. Very frequently the parties meet for the first time at the marriage altar. This plan does not commend itself to our advanced ideas of social life. Yet in actual practice, the results are quite as felicitous and harmonious as when the bride is wooed and won in the orthodox fashion. From what we have observed of domestic life in China, and know of it elsewhere, we are convinced that cases of incompatibility of tastes and dispositions do not occur more frequently

under the system of selection by parents, than where it is a matter of individual choice. However, we still retain a decided preference for the latter method.

The mode of family life in China is such that their system affords them special advantages. The son's wife is brought to the home of his parents at her marriage, where she is expected to soothe and serve them in their declining years. She is regarded as a menial, and sometimes treated as a slave. Whatever her lack of qualifications for her position, if she be insolent or indolent, the mother cannot accuse her son of afflicting her old age with an unkind or inefficient daughter-in-law. The choice was her own, and she has only herself to blame if it proves unfortunate.

The great evil of the practice is the betrothal of infants or children. Such contracts must be fulfilled. We know of the marriage of a bright, healthy young woman to an idiot, who had not mind enough to comprehend the

marriage ceremony. He was an intelligent and healthy infant when the betrothal was arranged, but he was afterward attacked by convulsions that continued until he became imbecile.

But the choice for this young girl was made by a wise father and kind mother, and we congratulate her as heartily as though he were

“The one out of all the world
That her heart, as well as her reason, chose.”

“There are no churches where I am going,” she says. “No temples to the living God. Only idols are worshipped there. I want you to give me some books from which I can teach them of Christ.”

We gladly concede to her request, and with the bridal trousseau of the Chinese maiden are packed the gospels of Christ. And into the dark region where the light of eternal

truth had never shone she bears the message of life.

Having taken of the proffered tea, the indispensable of Chinese social life, we conclude our visit with the usual ceremonies of adieus, and make our way through the dispersing crowd into the street.

CHAPTER V.

SAVED FROM SUICIDE.

Amid the bustle of the narrow street we make our way to the home of a woman who yesterday was saved from suicide. She had attempted to poison herself by opium, and barely escaped its deadly effects by the timely treatment of our missionary physician, who came in swift response to the call of the terror-stricken family.

What was the reason of this bright, healthy young woman seeking death at her own hand? *That she might, as a spirit, wreak vengeance on her mother-in-law !*

They were living in constant enmity, and by the clash of personal interests they had come to fierce combat. It seems quite incomprehensible, from our standpoint, how one could expect to avenge an enemy by taking

their own life ; yet, according to Chinese ideas, it is a very rational proceeding.

The belief that the spirits of the dead exercise control over the destinies and fortunes of the living is the source of deep-rooted superstitions. The practice of the rites of ancestral worship has been perpetuated more by fear of vengeance from the injured spirits of their progenitors for dereliction of the ceremony, than by filial piety. With the purpose of dire vengeance as a malevolent spirit, this deluded woman attempted to open the gates of death by her own hand.

Our heart is filled with faith and courage as we approach her home. Surely she will gladly listen to-day to the way of life and salvation through Christ. Gratitude for God's deliverance from the fearful consequences of her reckless deed will prompt her heart to accept his mercy and forgiveness. Thus we ponder as we approach her home.

We pass through the street-gate into the

court, where she resides. The apartments opening into this enclosure are occupied by several families, and a crowd of gossiping women greet us as we enter the court. We acknowledge their friendly recognition as we pass on to the door of the home of the patient of yesterday.

We find her wonderfully reconciled to being in the land of the living. Her rash act having brought her mother-in-law to terms, she seems in no mood to repeat the dose, but willing to trust to her limited corporeal powers to manage the household to her own satisfaction.

We are gratefully received, and we hasten to deliver the message with which our heart is charged. We open the Book of books and read to her of the living, loving God, who created us, and to whom we are responsible. We tell her of Him who has the power of life and death, and to whose service our lives should be given. But, oh! the indifference of that sinful, sinning soul! Her hard heart and

callous conscience give no response to the gracious message of salvation. She turns a deaf ear to the words of mercy and life from the God and Saviour, by whose loving hand she was snatched from the jaws of death.

One out of ten returned to give thanks, and bless, and own Him who saved and healed, but she was not of such. Among the unthankful and ungrateful will she be found. We leave her with our heart chilled and pained by her obdurate refusal of "the gift of God."

CHAPTER VI.

A TEACHER'S HOME.

We pass up the street a short distance and enter the home of our Chinese teacher. He is one of our oldest church members. The household gods have been abolished from their high places, and no smell of incense greets us as we enter. Mrs. Tai is a model housewife, and everything is clean and tidy. Bright, fresh paper covers the walls and ceiling. Pictures, mirrors and clocks, ornament the well-furnished rooms.

The Chinese are very fond of clocks, and they buy them for ornaments. In the homes of the wealthy there are several in every room. They may be seen all pointing to a different hour, for it is too much work to keep them all in running order, and one or two only indicate the time.

This home has three apartments, a kitchen in the centre, and a living room on either side.



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themselves

their taste and understanding. The parables of Christ, with their rich Oriental pictures, have especial interest and significance to them.

The mother of this household also reads a lesson from the Scriptures for her improvement and our encouragement. With the hope in our heart that the day will come when such cleanly Christian homes shall be multiplied in this Empire, where squalor and idolatry prevail, we leave them, to visit a family in an adjoining court.

CHAPTER VII.

WANTED, — “LOAVES AND FISHES.”

We find a bright, pleasant home, semi-foreign in its appointments. The owner has been in the employ of a European for several years, which has brought him constantly in contact with foreign conveniences. Inasmuch as his income will allow, he has furnished his home with foreign articles, such as a stove, lamps, dishes, etc.

For several months previous to this visit we had been teaching his wife, and she had frequently visited us. At our last visit we were disappointed to find that our intercourse and instruction were encouraged, not because of personal regard for us, or interest in the doctrine we taught, but to try to enlist our influence in obtaining promotion for him in

the business in which he was employed, the proprietor of which was a friend of ours.

After receiving us with more than usual warmth and ceremony, the master of the house made the definite request toward which all their attentions had tended, asking us to use our influence for his advancement in wages and honors. As we knew nothing of his business capacity, and, moreover, did not wish to advise our friend concerning the management of his affairs, we kindly, but firmly, declined to aid him in the way suggested.

A look of vexation and disappointment overspread his face, and was reflected in the countenance of his wife, as she read mechanically the lesson she had most carefully prepared for the occasion. After brief instruction we left them. Our departure was evidently even more agreeable to them than our warmly welcomed arrival.

The woman was bright and attractive and

rapidly advancing in a knowledge of Christian truth, and we were very anxious to continue her lessons. With book in hand, and doubting heart, we knock at the door, that ever before has swung back in welcome response to our call. But to-day, after some delay, it is opened just wide enough for the servant to recognize us and inform us that the lady of the house is "*not at home.*" Understanding the meaning of this well-bred and convenient conventionality, we take our final leave of this home, knowing well, were the visit repeated, the same negative reception would await us.

And, thought we in that hour, with a heart hot with the insult of deception and rejection, Oh! the dark ways and vain tricks of the heathen Chinese; who can comprehend or equal the duplicity and machination of their depraved hearts? No, our condemnation was rather more catholic in spirit. We pondered deeply on the painful fact, *how much like*

the rest of mankind the Chinese are. We thought of the selfish instincts which everywhere pervade human hearts, and of their need, with us, of the regeneration that cometh only by the salvation of Christ and grace of God.

Do you not remember, in that favored land of the chosen people, in the sacred ministry of the divine Saviour, there were those who followed Christ because they did eat and were filled, and when material benefits were withheld, walked no more with him? Human experience, everywhere, testifies to the universality of human depravity. In common with us have the Chinese sin and selfishness. In common with us have they need of Christ.

CHAPTER VIII.

BELOVED DAUGHTERS — UNBURIED DEAD —
“WEARY AND HEAVY LADEN.”

Among the women who crowded into the chapel service last Sabbath was an old lady clothed in rags, upon whose stricken soul the gracious message of “good news” fell with grateful blessing. With doubting hesitancy she asked us to visit her, for she was uncertain what reception we might meet from the other members of the family.

She has no sons, only a daughter, and her home with her is merely a matter of sufferance. She has no social or legal right to a warm corner beneath the roof of her daughter’s home, where she may pass the few remaining years of her weary earthly pilgrimage.

According to Chinese law and custom, a daughter becomes one of her husband’s family at her marriage. She resides with them and

ministers to the household. She does not wear mourning upon the death of one of her own relatives, nor make sacrifices and offerings at the graves of her ancestry. But, on the contrary, all such ceremonies and observances are performed for her husband's relatives. Upon the eldest son devolves the care and support of his parents in their old age. This obligation is considered as binding as the care of children by their parents during their helpless years. Upon the eldest son also rests the duty of supplying the supposed needs of the spirits of his parents after their death. He does this by burning paper figures of horses, carts, garments, coin, etc., at their burial, which are thought to assume a substantial form in the other world for the use of the departed. The preference for sons above daughters is due to such institutions and superstitions, and not to lack of natural affection.

We have seen daughters as lovingly and

fondly cherished in China as in any part of the world. The affection lavished upon them is far more disinterested than that bestowed upon sons. Sons are popularly regarded as so much paying or payable property—an investment that shall yield an annuity to meet the needs of old age.

We recall an instance of loving affection in a mother of several sons and one daughter. She was a poor sewing woman, who was obliged to support an opium-smoking husband and her children by the needle. We often employed her. One New Year's day—the occasion of national festivity, when rich and poor, to the extent of their ability, assume holiday attire and appearance—she brought her little girl to call upon us. The proud, fond mother had denied herself the needfuls of life, in order to obtain fine clothing for the child. Very gay and beautiful did the little maiden look, with her bright, black eyes casting half shy, half mischievous glances from

beneath the deep black silk fringe that hung about her face, from the bright, beaded corona which adorned her head. Proudly did she eye the braid and embroidery of her new robe, that had cost her mother weary hours of toil, and pinching self-denial.

The touch of nature that makes the whole world kin was seen in that mother's face, as she, with proud satisfaction, displayed the precious child, so finely arrayed by her unstinted sacrifice. The child was but four years old, and her feet were still unbound.

"Your dear little girl," we said. "You will let her feet grow, will you not? Surely you will never cause her to suffer with bound feet?"

Swift and emphatic came the answer: "Do you think I do not love my little girl?"

The cruel custom of foot-binding is so popular that loving mothers would consider it a very serious dereliction of duty did they not thus afflict their little daughters. And, alas

for human vanity, children are frequently seen suffering such torture with their crippled feet that they cannot repress the tears, who are unwilling to have the bandages unloosed to give the tiny "golden lillies" a chance to grow.

Another instance presents itself as an illustration of the fact that many of the daughters of Cathay are dearly beloved.

In memory, we see the terror-stricken, grief-stained face of a mother, in anguish of heart, standing beside the bed of her daughter who was sick unto death. In wild dismay she entreats the physician to save her *yen-chu*, "eye-ball." How like the love of the Father, "The apple of His eye."

I have seen many such evidences that natural affection goes out as spontaneously to daughters as to sons. The greater joy at the birth of a son is due to the promptings of self-interest, and not disinterested affection.

But, because of social and civil regulations,

this aged mother has neither influence nor authority in her daughter's home, and she invites us to come to see her with much hesitancy. We, however, do not hesitate to accept, but go prepared for any reception.

Through the *débris* and refuse in the narrow street we pick our way, and pass under a dilapidated gateway into a court. The filthy, ragged children of the families who quarter here gather about us. Each family occupies a single apartment of the rooms that open into this court.

We see a coffin standing conspicuously among the fuel and rubbish in the court. As we enter the home we came to visit, our first inquiry is concerning the unburied dead.

"Whose coffin is that in the court?" we ask.

"Oh, it's the husband of that woman over there, who died last month," the old lady replied, with the utmost *nonchalance*.

"And when will he be buried?" we ask.

"That is not certain," she answers. "They

are very poor—can barely pass the days. Maybe by spring they will have money enough for the funeral.”

Sometimes the dead remain unburied an indefinite length of time. The family become so familiar with the coffin that it is viewed with perfect indifference, and the daily life passes on without reference to it. But however long a time they may find it convenient to defer the interment, when the event does transpire they are expected to manifest the violent grief incident to fresh bereavement.

The art of geomancy is one of the chief occasions of delaying interments. This is a system of sorcery practiced by the Taoist priests, by which they profess to select a burial-place which shall give peace to the dead and prosperity to the living. They often exact large fees for their services, and families are sometimes impoverished by trying to gain a favorable verdict from them. The kind of soil, the water courses, the hills, and the conformation

of the land, — indeed, every physical feature is thought to have some significance, presaging prosperity or adversity, honor or dishonor, to the dead progenitors and living posterity. Sometimes years are consumed by the wealthy in deciding the burial-place, the coffin in the meantime placed in a temporary vault. Occasionally a physical combination is found which favors some members of the family and not others. This naturally engenders strife and discord, and separate priests are employed to select with reference to their several interests. If they fail to agree upon a site, the dead may remain for years in the receptacle in which it was deposited.

We pass by the unburied dead into the clutter and confusion of the low room into which we have been invited. It presents a picture of hovel life, such as is common among the poorest class. The light from the paper window shows the poverty and squalor of the interior.

A sick child nestles beneath a ragged cover-

ing, on the brick bed. The mother attempts to hush its inarticulate cries as she prepares a seat for us. The other little ones crowd in, and the neighbors throng upon us to see and hear "the foreign lady," if, perchance, we are designated by so respectful a title in their minds.

The hideous face of the household god, grim with the smoke of much incense, looks down upon us from his conspicuous niche in the wall, while we tell to that weary mother of worn countenance, and the benighted souls and darkened minds of the squalid crowd that fill the room, of the rest for the weary and heavy laden in Christ. The aged mother, whose soul was touched by divine truth in the service of yesterday, tries to tell them that this gracious gospel has for them promise of joy and rest eternal, not to be obtained by merit accumulated through weary cycles of transmigration, but by faith in the merit of another—even Jesus Christ.

But they are poor, wretchedly poor, and

have no desire for, or comprehension of, spiritual blessings. It seemed as though "the cares of the world" so crowded the hearts before us that the "good seed" found no lodgement there. But who can tell? Mayhap there was good ground in that company of burdened lives and suffering hearts who listened that day, for the first time, to the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. Mayhap some souls among them have learned, amid their pain and poverty, to cast their care on One who careth for them, to whose tender mercy they were commended that hour.

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CHAPTER IX.

A HOME OF RANK — WIVES — OPIUM — IGNORANCE — INDIFFERENCE.

The doors of the home of a wealthy official are opened to us by the hand of disease. Let us accompany the missionary physician on her errand of mercy to this home.

We pass through the outer courts and corridors, into the large central court, where we alight from our sedan-chairs. Various offices and lobbies open into this enclosure, and on the side opposite the street is a large reception room. The floor of this room is paved with bricks, about a foot square. A large oblong divan is seen on the side opposite the main entrance. Highly polished and richly carved chairs, with small tables between them, are arranged about the room in accordance with the technique of Chinese etiquette. A visitor familiar with their ceremonies would

be able to comprehend the esteem with which he was regarded by the seat accorded him. Handsome lanterns are suspended from the ceiling; and the room is ornamented with illuminated scrolls, having upon them quotations from the classics of Confucius, large vases containing artificial flowers, and mirrors. There is evidence of wealth in all the appointments, yet the room looks very dull and cheerless, and we gladly pass on to the living apartments.

We are cordially received by the wives of the "great man." And such a picture of domestic felicity as they present! No doubt scenes of jealousy and strife are often enacted in this polygamous home; yet they all appear so bright and happy, it hardly seems possible that such ever transpire.

The first wife, a woman of middle age, was espoused in her youth. Although she was the mother of sons and daughters, her liege lord, as he advanced in rank, added to his house-

hold from the young fair daughters of the land. And she, — what boundless magnanimity! — chaperons the younger brides with kindly care. We never ceased to marvel at their amicable relation. The complex alliance has the sanction of public opinion, and they appeared as reconciled to the presence of one another as sisters of the same family.

They are all bejewelled and bepowdered, and richly dressed in silks and furs. Their tiny feet are encased in fancy embroidered shoes. Large, heavy ear-rings adorn their ears, and their hands and arms, of wondrous symmetry and beauty, are ornamented with massive bracelets and many unique and expensive rings. The fingers are also ornamented by slender silver sheaths, worn to protect the finger nails, which are allowed to grow very long. Their hair is arranged in various fantastic styles over frameworks.

They all chatter merrily, and greet us with the utmost cordiality. Our intercourse with

this household is frequent and friendly. They proceed to remove our wraps with their own hands, commenting freely, in the meanwhile, to one another, upon our dress and appearance. Some of their remarks are more sincere than complimentary. Large feet and short fingernails seem to them inconsistent with aristocracy. But then, we are foreigners, and can read books. One can "cure diseases" and the other is able to "explain doctrines." So, notwithstanding we lack some requisites of quality, and belong to a less favored race, we are received and treated as equals.

The first wife is suffering from the effect of opium smoking, and since she persists in using the pernicious drug, the doctor can only afford temporal relief by her treatment.

The missionary physician is very frequently called to minister to the wretched victims of this habit, very frequently called to look upon their hopeless agony. They usually conceal the smoking apparatus during the first visit of the

physician, recognizing, themselves, that it is the source of their disease. But the habit is easily detected by a glance at the sallow, cadaverous countenance of the patient, and the odor of the fumes, that mark its victims.

The opium smoker always reclines when taking the drug. We see, behind the silk drapery of the couch, the opium pipe, or "smoking-pistol," as it is aptly termed, and the small lamp, used to set fire to the drug, a small pellet having been placed in the bowl of the pipe. Various estimates are made in regard to the extent of the use of opium in China ; but there is uniformity of testimony in regard to the rapid increase in the consumption.

Men and women, high and low, rich and poor, yield to its ecstasy and agony. The wealthy official, cumbered by the cares of state, seeks rest from the burdens of public affairs in the slumber of its influence. The distracted merchant is lulled to rest by its

seductive charms. The poor coolie, in his damp, dreary hovel, sees beatific visions in its fumes. The lady of wealth breaks the monotony of her idle life of gossip and gambling by its blissful fancies. The haggard toiler deafens her ears to the cries of her famishing little ones, and floats away from poverty and pain to the paradise of plenty revealed in its dreams. But alas for the intensified agony with which they wake to the care, the perplexity, the monotony, and the poverty of life. Yes, it renders them impervious to the ordinary troubles and sufferings of life, by the overpowering anguish of the insatiate demands of the appetite it creates.

The virus of the opium trade is enervating the physical strength, paralyzing the mental powers, and degrading the moral nature of the people. Surely, the history of the opium war is a dark record of selfish outrage. From its pages we learn of a pagan monarch willingly destroying what would injure his subjects,

rather than fill his coffers with the ill-gotten gains, while for the opium thus destroyed England demands an indemnity of six millions of dollars, and then, by the power of her resistless warfare, demolishes every barrier that the Chinese government had attempted to raise for its protection from the direful curse.

The British government receives a yearly revenue of over thirty millions of dollars from the opium trade. Who can estimate the revenue of misery it brings to the hearts and homes of China? Should the importation of opium cease now, it is too late! Many have become so impoverished by its use that they are no longer able to purchase the foreign drug, and thousands of acres of China's fair domains are already planted with these seeds of death.

We see the "skeleton" in this home through the silk drapery of the lady's couch, but for the time she seems bright and cheerful. They prepare refreshments for us. A unique tray,

inlaid with pearls, is placed upon the table before us. This tray is divided into several compartments, and each section contains different kinds of fruit and confection. These are politely urged upon us.

The doctor then opens her medicine chest and proceeds to administer to the varied ills of the family. The convenient opportunity for treatment seems to have the effect of multiplying their diseases. The servants crowd in with newly discovered ailments, and quite a brisk clinic ensues. After their pains are allayed, and their curiosity somewhat appeased in regard to the contents of the bottles and use of the instruments, we proceed to tell them of the Word of God and its message of salvation. We produce a catechism of Scripture truths, and offer to teach them to read from it. Not one of the women of that large family can read. A bright, intelligent servant girl can recognize a few characters, and that is the sum of the literary attainments of

the women of this distinguished household. But the opportunity, which reveals so signally the ignorance of the women, is utilized to display the intelligence and accomplishments of a proud and petted child of the house. A son, just merging into his teens, is brought in, who glibly reads the book. But, although perfectly familiar with the characters, he does not comprehend the meaning of a single sentence. It could not be expected that he should understand the meaning of the divine truths therein contained, without explanation. Yet, neither would he comprehend a native book without especial instruction in the meaning. That is regarded as a distinct study, and never learned in connection with the form and sound of the characters.

While the son is displaying his acquirements the "great man," his father, appears. He is a tall, dignified person. His hair is dressed in the uniform style, with shaven forehead and long braid. He has on his official hat, to the top

of which is attached a "button," looking very much like a large marble. Such buttons are always seen upon the hats of officials. They are of nine different colors, and indicate the exact rank of the wearer. These buttons are sometimes conferred upon foreigners by the Chinese government, in recognition of distinguished services. They are then mounted and worn as orders. This official is dressed in fur-lined satin garments, made in the loose, flowing style of his countrymen.

He bows in acknowledging our presence, and then casts impartial glances among his numerous wives. He is evidently very proud of his precious son, and anxious to show us that he inherits his brains from his illustrious father. He takes the book and reads from it himself, but with little more comprehension of it than his child heir. He asks us what it means, this foreign doctrine that we have come to teach in "the Middle Kingdom."

We declare "the truth as it is in Christ

Jesus." But we find him with a callous conscience, and a heart hardened by conservatism and conceit. What has his eminent nation to learn of the "outside barbarian?" Have they not a civil service that needs no "reform?" And a system of ethics older than the sermon on the mount? What does it concern him, the fact or fable that

" Jesus died on Calvary's mountain,
Long time ago."

He is a fair specimen of the official class in his attitude towards Christianity. They are often very friendly to missionaries, but it is a mistake to infer from that that they have any interest in the gospel. Although such men have little or no faith in idols, they are very tenacious in the observance of the rites of ancestral worship, and their whole lives are controlled by heathen superstitions. The most progressive class patronize the medical work and institutions for education in Western

sciences. But such cordial intercourse is no evidence of love for Christ, or faith in Him.

The church is too apt to overvalue the influence and patronage of this class — too eager with the query, “Have any of the rulers believed on Him?” forgetting that, in the providence of God, it has been the history of the Church, the world over, to lay its foundation among the lowly, and that it is a more significant fact of progress when the common people hear him gladly, than when a ruler enquires by night. Having fully discussed the privileges and obligations of the Christian faith, we leave them. We are escorted to our sedan-chairs with much ceremony, and politely urged to come again.

CHAPTER X.

A COUNTRY PASTOR'S HOME — NAMING THE BABY — DOMINANT HEIR — BIBLE LESSON.

A hundred miles of travel in a springless, seatless, flat-bottomed cart, drawn by mules, brings us to the home of a pastor of our country churches.

The family consists of the husband and the wife, a daughter of twelve, a son of three, and a baby boy, and the grandmother. This aged woman and her family were among the earliest converts of our church. Their home was in a distant province, south of Peking, where the gospel had never been preached until introduced by the conversion of her husband. He first heard the truth when in Peking attending a lawsuit. One day, when passing a mission chapel, he heard the voice of the preacher, and was prompted to enter. He

candidly pondered the truth he heard, and became a believer in Christ. When he returned to his home he eagerly confessed the "pearl of great price" which he had found, and so influenced his family that his wife believed, and shortly afterward the whole household were baptized. A few years passed of faithful service and patient suffering, and he "was not, for God took him."

This preacher is the only son of that family. He is one of the most faithful and efficient of the native helpers in the employ of the church. This old lady, his mother, is always in labors abundant. Her zeal sometimes exceeds her discretion, yet she continually exerts a strong influence for Christianity.

We find this family of six persons living in *two* rooms — a great advance in comfort and luxury over the majority of the people. The outer room is small, and used for cooking and preparing the food. The limited space is shared by quantities of nondescript rubbish.

A door opens from this room into the other apartment. It is draped with a blue cotton *portière*, not new or clean. The inner room has the brick platform on one side, where the family sleep at night, wrapped in their several *pei-wa*, — comfortables, — which are folded to serve as covering and mattress. The low, dark room is lighted by one paper window, extending across the side. A general air of disorder prevails everywhere. But notwithstanding the confusion, a sweet Christian spirit characterizes the inmates.

It is the hour for evening prayer. The little ones are sleeping. The father reads "Let not your heart be troubled," and we sing "He leadeth me." Then he who was fostered in heathen superstitions, and educated by every social custom about him to regard women as inferiors, having been taught by Christianity to appreciate and honor womanhood, turns to the mother of his children and says, "You lead us in prayer."

With intelligent expression and fervent

faith she prays for the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of her people.

How wonderful! What the charms of the Taoist priests, ethics of Confucius, and merit of the Buddhist faith have failed to do for the elevation of woman, the gospel of Christ has accomplished. Where once the wife and mother had no hope of the immortality of her sex, men and women bow around our common altar and together repeat, "Our Father, which art in Heaven."

Chinese children are not given a proper name by which they are called from infancy to old age. They are usually given a pet name when they are a month old. If the child is a boy, the event is celebrated by a grand feast and great rejoicing. The relatives and friends are invited, and they are expected to respond, bringing gifts. The baby's head is shaved by a barber, called in for the occasion. The child is called by the name he then receives until he goes to school, when he is named by the

teacher. A custom that American pedagogues may congratulate themselves does not obtain in this country. One would need the vocabulary of Adam to find suitable names for the scores of little folks committed to his care. Then the perplexity of remembering what appellation had been accorded them!

Later on in life, when a Chinaman is married, or arrives to literary distinction, he may receive a third name. Very odd names are sometimes given to children who are dearly prized, such as dog, cat, beggar, louse. The parents think to deceive the gods by such misnomers, lest they avenge their unfaithfulness in sacrifice or service by afflicting a child whom they were known to cherish. It frequently occurs that baby girls have flowery or significant names, but more often they are called by numbers, as girl 1st, girl 2nd, and so on, of such a family. Men and boys are also designated in that way, the surname being used, as Wang 1st, etc.

But the children of the Christian families of our church are baptized in infancy, when they receive a Christian name. Their names are usually taken from the Bible. Paul, John, and Samuel, Mary and Martha, are favorite names. The father of this family chooses to name his sons Gershon and Gershom, or their adaptation in sound into the Chinese language, and his daughter Wen Shem.

The eldest son was the grandmother's pet and pride; and, like many a grandmother of a different race, she "loved not wisely, but too well." By overindulgence the bright, impetuous child ruled the whole household with tyrannical exaction, according to his will. We once ventured to suggest that the wisdom of Solomon be applied in discipline, but the grandmother assured us they had tried the rod, but were obliged to desist from using it because he did not like it!

The mother and grandmother have bound feet, but the young daughter has natural feet,

which will never suffer the cruel torture of compressed deformity. Christian principle in this matter has taken so firm a hold upon the consciences of the families of the church that they seldom bind the feet of their children.

Many a pleasant hour have we spent beneath the roof of that parsonage home, teaching the women of the house and the others who gathered there for instruction. With intelligent faith they received of the things of God. Their countenances would beam with joy and hope as they comprehended the promises of God and the gift of His grace.

The neighbors would crowd in with friendly familiarity. There is something of a communistic spirit among the Chinese. The home in a neighborhood that has the sunniest room and the most convenient place to sit is a general resort. They appropriate one another's things with great license. We have often marveled at the amicable familiarity of their

intercourse. There is a conspicuous lack of quiet and seclusion in their homes. People come and go, using the fire or water with scarce an acknowledgment. In fact, in the majority of Chinese homes, all things are "common and unclean."

CHAPTER I.

WANT AND POVERTY. 100

FAC

From the crowd and noise of the street we pass through a narrow way into the house of a poor old man and his wife. The room is eight feet long and six feet wide, and is made of natural stone, with a carpet as carpet and a paper window. We see the old man sitting on a bench which is made of wood and has been worn during many years for the use of the poor. The bench is made of wood and is a simple structure. The old man and his wife are its only occupants. They have

to the very verge of the grave. Their ghastly hands seem just now stretched forth to push them in.

“Where is your wife?” we ask, as the feeble old man bestirs himself, and turns his sightless eyes towards the creaking door.

“Gone to borrow rice,” he says. “We have nothing to eat.”

We do not question the declaration. The room has an air of utter destitution, and the empty rice-bowls on the table confirm his statement. And yet, — he took a pipe from his mouth when he said, “We have nothing to eat.” We are forced to consider the problem so often thrust upon our attention in other lands, How can the starving poor obtain tobacco? Why will they buy it when suffering for bread?

But thoughts of luxury do not remain with us long. They are soon banished by a painful sense of the destitution of that emaciated, shivering form before us, and the companion

of his suffering and poverty, who, half clad, has gone forth into the bitter winter air to beg.

We involuntarily reach forth our hand and drop some *cash* into his withered palm. His fingers scarce close over it before he expresses a desire to join the "Jesus church."

We turn away, pondering that ever-recurring question, which engages so much of the missionary's thought, How shall we minister to the starving poor who crowd our pathway, and protect the church from the hypocritical professions of faith of those who "did eat and were filled." But let us judge of such in charity. May they not, in all sincerity, wish to espouse a cause which brings them needed help? Is it far from the principle which actuates faith and service in many of the disciples of Christ, the obedience of reward?

A noted philanthropist has said, "An empty stomach cannot digest a moral precept." In vain do we preach of streets of gold and gates

of pearl in the eternity beyond to those who who are suffering for temporal necessities. Our preaching is vain if unaccompanied by substantial charity.

“ If a brother or sister be naked or destitute of daily food, and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled, notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?”

CHAPTER XII.

ONE WOMAN'S ATTEMPT TO READ.

We pass from the street to a tidy court, and hence into a clean, bright home. New paper on the walls and ceiling gives an air of cheer and comfort to the room. Vases and candlesticks ornament the side-table, and fresh matting makes the platform an inviting seat. The tidy dress and well-kept hair of the woman residing here possess us in her favor, and we are reassured by her smile of welcome as she invites us to a seat.

She has attended church occasionally, and has some knowledge of the truth there taught. We have in hand some copies of the catechism, such as we always take when visiting the people. We usually find opportunity to teach the women, or, at least, leave them to be read by the men of the family.

“Would you not like to learn to read from

this book," we ask. "It teaches of the true God, and how we should worship him."

"Oh, yes; let me read it. I should like very much to learn to read," she eagerly responds. We open to the first chapter and repeat the first lines, which constant repetition to others has rendered very familiar to us.

Q. "Jen tang pai to shao shen?"

A. "Chih yu i wei chen shen."

How many Gods ought men to worship?

There is but one true God.

This is followed by a series of questions and answers concerning true and false gods. But this woman never advanced beyond the first two lines, and never mastered those. She is the only Chinese woman whom we ever met who could not learn to read. The majority of them are quick to acquire, and, with very few exceptions, are able to learn to read and understand readily. We never undertook to teach one but what could master the catechism if her attention and interest could be retained in

the study, with the sole exception of this woman.

She was very efficient in domestic affairs, and rather intelligent in conversation, and persistent and patient in study, but she made no appreciable advancement in mental attainments.

“Now listen, and repeat this line slowly,” we would say, “How many gods ought men to worship?”

“How many men ought gods to worship?” would come the answer in clear, firm tones.

“No, no; not that; gods do not worship men, but men worship gods,” we would remonstrate. “Again, slowly, how many gods ought men to worship?”

With a patient sigh the literary aspirant would again repeat, “How many men ought gods to worship?”

With no sign of relaxing interest, or any intention of abandoning her task, she continued to blunder over that lesson. Thinking she

might have become confused by this passage, and each repetition render her more liable to persist in the mistake, we turned to a fresh page and attempted to teach her to say:

“False gods—have they power to create men? They have no power to create men, but are created by men.”

But the same confusion of gods and men follows, and we return to the first lines.

While we are attempting to teach this remarkably studious and stupid pupil, her son comes in. He is a bright young man, and somewhat advanced in Chinese literary attainments. He listens for a few minutes to his mother's blunders, and then takes the book and reads from it.

A bright thought occurs to us as we rise to go, and we turn to the young man and say, “Your mother is very anxious to learn to read the book. You will help her with the lessons, will you not?”

“Oh,” replies this offspring of the land of

filial piety, "it is no use to try to teach her anything. She is too stupid!"

We make no reply to this remark, but with an encouraging smile, and kind word to the not brilliant, yet faithful student, we take our departure.

CHAPTER XIII.

HOMES IN SEVERALTY.

As we walk down the street, "Please come in, please come in," a polite form of salutation and invitation, falls upon our ears. We respond by turning and entering the small court. We pass on to the home to which we have been courteously called by the man who stood in the gateway. His first wife lives here, the second a short distance away, upon another street.

This is the only instance of polygamy among the common people that has ever come under our notice, although the practice is quite general among the wealthy upper classes. They usually all reside on the same premises. But for reasons that pertain to his peace this man has arranged "homes in severalty" for his wives.

We find the room furnished with the ordi-

nary comforts of Chinese life, and the wife seems satisfied with her position, yet "the heart knoweth its own bitterness."

Her husband has been in the habit of attending our chapel services. He has some knowledge of the doctrines of Christ, and has manifested interest and faith in them. He cordially invites us to sing the hymns to which he has there listened, and seems to appreciate our effort to instruct his family.

He is quite impartial in regard to the spiritual interests of his two households, and the following day we are invited to repeat the instruction in the other home. We willingly accept, and at the appointed hour find our way to the place designated.

Our intended visit has been announced to the neighbors, and they crowd in, filling the room and court. Curiosity often overpowers prejudice, and with the inquisitive eyes we sometimes find listening ears.

We are soon seated on the window-sill,

which is wide enough to make a comfortable seat, our feet resting upon the platform. The people crowd around us, the most venturesome examining our clothes, and commenting upon our appearance. They fear we must be cold, "such small sleeves." They marvel at the size of our feet, and inwardly make invidious comparisons between their own "golden lilly" extremities, dressed in finery, and our unbound feet, encased in leather.

But the discussion ends, and conversation ceases, as we begin to sing,

"There's a land that is fairer than day."

They marvel to hear their own language in a foreign tune, and listen eagerly. Very obscure are their thoughts and theories concerning their native systems of religion. Dread superstitions, fear of invisible powers, is the only realization they have of the supernatural. They are sometimes haunted by thoughts of the unnumbered, unknown destinies of trans-

migration. The "fair land" of "many mansions" just on the other side of the portal, death, is to them a "new song" of wondrous mystery. We find it difficult to divest their minds of the idea that we are telling them of a foreign God and Saviour, of a foreign Heaven for foreign people—and "line upon line, and precept upon precept," are required to convince them of the fact that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

While thus we declare to them "the glorious gospel of the blessed God," from that crowd of heathen listeners comes the query, "Does everybody in America love Jesus?" With painful remembrance of those to whom the gospel has first been spoken, who have put it from them and judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, we answer—"Jesus loves everybody in America."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE OLD LADY WHO NEVER SINNED—CHINESE WEDDING—INFANT DIET.

Let us turn in at this gateway, here at the right. The courts are spacious, and the buildings large and numerous. However, a general air of decay prevades the place, indicating unmistakably "better days."

We enter the hall which divides the principal rooms, and pass through the door at the left. We find ourselves in a large sunny room. A broad platform extends the entire length. On the opposite side of the room are large chests and wardrobes, made of polished wood, with bright brass handles—relics of those "better days." Pictures and vases ornament the room.

No idols are visible, and we miss the odor of incense which usually pervades Chinese homes. This family have for several years

been connected with our mission church. The aged grandfather, who died last year, his sons and grandsons, have all identified themselves with Christianity. The women of the household generally concede to the truth, of which, however, they have but little comprehension.

But the aged sire took his stand as a disciple of Christ against the persistent persecution of his wife. She had no fellowship or appreciation of the doctrine of forgiveness of sin, for, as she emphatically and persistently declared, she had never sinned. Surely such a person could not be expected to appreciate or accept the gift of a Saviour! Although without faith or interest in the doctrine we represent, she is not unkindly disposed towards us as individuals, and enjoys the novelty of our dress and appearance.

She urges us to be seated beside her, at the same time taking her pipe from her mouth and carefully wiping the stem upon her handker-

chief ; then, politely offering it to us, she says, " Will you not smoke ? "

" No, thank you, we never smoke," we reply.

She is unable to conceal her amazement at our perverse taste, but complacently resumes her pipe.

Her daughter-in-law enters the room with her infant in arms. The child is but five days old, and the mother is again engaged in the routine of daily household cares.

Our arrival having been announced, the other members of the family come in to greet us, and some time is consumed in friendly converse. We notice particularly among them the daughter-in-law, whose wedding we attended during our last visit to this village. The bashful bride of that occasion now wears an air of quiet docility that argues well for the discipline of her mother-in-law, and her own teachable spirit.

We do not know who was the " match-maker " in this alliance, but apparently he may

be congratulated upon the success of the union. Both men and women are employed to conduct the negotiations of betrothals. They receive a certain fee for their services as "go-between." Marriages are sometimes arranged by parents without the office of a third party. In some parts of the Empire money is paid for wives; the price paid varies from a few dollars to several hundreds. The amount is regulated by the merits and charms of the bride, and also by her father's circumstances. If he is straitened financially she may be obtained at a "bargain," or if he can afford to wait, he may reserve her at a price that only a wealthy suitor can pay.

Yet, notwithstanding these and many other prudential reasons that shape their destinies, the Chinese have a saying that "The feet of people destined to marry each other are tied together with invisible threads."

The leading features attending a marriage are the same all over the Empire, but local

customs, incident to it, vary greatly. Weddings are frequently attended with expense and display that the parties can ill afford. Stimulated by family pride, they indulge in costly presents and extravagant style, which their circumstances will not warrant — traits of character which go to prove the universal brotherhood of man!

The bride is carried from her home in a sedan-chair, closely curtained, attended by a showy retinue. The bride of official rank has a train of great length accompanying her. Official insignia, tablets bearing inscriptions indicating literary rank, lanterns conspicuously stamped with titles, banners and dragon pendants are borne in state. A band of musicians are always in attendance, playing on drums, gongs, fifes, and flutes, rendering an inharmonious jargon of sounds. In the rear of the train the boxes containing presents are carried, suspended on poles, on the shoulders of coolies.

Red is the color worn for festive occasions. The bridal chair is draped with it, and over the gay robes of many colors in which the bride is arrayed is worn a thick, red bridal veil. White is the color assumed for Chinese mourning, and it would be considered an exceedingly unlucky omen were any one to appear at a wedding dressed in white.

When the bride arrives at the home of her husband's family, where the ceremony transpires, and where she will reside in the future, she is escorted by matrons to the room containing the ancestral tablets. These tablets are made of ivory, wood, or stone, and vary in size, from a few inches in height to several feet. They have the appearance of a slab mounted on a standard. Household tablets are small and usually enshrined, differing in this respect from the large stone ones seen in temples and courts, erected to commemorate sages and public officials. The names of the departed are inscribed upon these tablets.

The bridegroom awaits the bride in the family hall, where they together prostrate themselves before the tablets of his ancestors three times, and then seal their vows by drinking cups of wine. In some places it is customary for them to salute the members of the family present at the close of the ceremony. They then withdraw to another room, and the bridegroom lifts the veil, and they behold each other for the first time, perhaps. The relatives and guests soon enter. They comment freely upon the bride, and discuss her appearance with cruel frankness or fulsome flattery. This trying ordeal the bride is expected to endure with the placid indifference of a sphinx. The remainder of the day is occupied with feasting and festivity.

The daughter-in-law of this family, whose marriage we witnessed, came from a heathen home, where every idolatrous custom was believed and practised; but since her husband's

family were Christians, she must be married in conformity with the rites of the church.

The time of her arrival is at hand. The din of approaching music falls upon our ears. The red chair dawns upon our view. The bride has arrived.

The door of the sedan chair is opened and she appears. Tiny feet and gaily embroidered skirts are all that can be seen of her, her head and shoulders being covered with the thick, red bridal veil. She is escorted by her bridesmaids, who are not young, girlish beauties, but aged chaperons, to the room where the ceremony will transpire.

Poor, trembling child! How we pity her! What does she know of "The form of the Solemnization of Matrimony," as contained in the discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church? She has seen her sisters married mayhap, and knows, according to Chinese custom, the bride is expected to know nothing and do nothing on such an occasion; but this

foreign method of tying knots, how it puzzles her!

Fortunately the officiating clergyman, a native preacher, is a man of wonderful tact, and equal to the situation. He has privately instructed the bridegroom where "the man shall answer,—I will." As soon as the bride has groped her way into position beside the *imminent* husband, the ceremony begins. The form has been translated into their native tongue. After the preliminary reading the clergyman turns to the groom and asks, "Wilt thou have this woman to be thy wedded wife, to live together after God's ordinance in the holy state of Matrimony? Wilt thou love her, comfort her, honor and keep her, in sickness and in health, and, forsaking all other, keep ye unto her as long as ye both shall live?"

Then comes the answer, with accents of purpose and of faith,—“I will.” The clergyman then turns to the bride, and addressing her,

says: "You are expected to do the same by him." And so they were married.

A prayer follows; the bride withdraws, and her veil is removed. She returns with her husband to salute the relatives and guests, and again retires.

The feast is now served. Men and women dine in separate apartments, but the same kinds of food are served to all. The company is seated around several small tables, which are destitute of any cloth covering. Such an article as a table-cloth never is used by the Chinese of any class. In accordance with Chinese custom, the dessert is first served. Oranges, nuts, grapes, melon, and pumpkin seeds are placed before us. These are removed when served, and more substantial viands follow. A bowl of rice and chopsticks are placed before each person. Various dishes of fish, meat, and fowl are placed upon the table, from which all serve themselves and one another. A variety of cakes in fantastic and artistic

designs are served. The Chinese make very little that corresponds to pastry or puddings, but cake in some form is a common article of diet among them.

Chinese cookery does not commend itself to the taste of foreigners, though it is by no means destitute of a variety of wholesome food. It is highly seasoned with garlic, onions and oils, that render it unpalatable to any but native taste. There is a popular and prevalent misapprehension that rats and mice are common articles of food among the Chinese. They may sometimes be eaten by the poorest classes, and the same is true of other countries, but during several years of residence in China we have never seen them prepared as food in the home of any class. And, as Dr. Williams wisely observes, "Rats are not so easily caught as to be common or cheap in the market."

After the feast we go in to pay our respects to the bride, who, in accordance with the rules of propriety of the occasion, sits with down-

cast eyes, listening, patiently and unmoved, to the personal comments, made freely in her presence. Her amiability seems likely to endure the test. We then present our compliments and congratulations to the hostess, and withdraw from the festive scenes.

Several months have elapsed since that event, and we again visit the family. We find the blushing bride developed into a dutiful and efficient daughter-in-law, who, quietly and patiently, serves the elders, and is obedient to all the technique of filial piety.

We answer their many kind inquiries about the duties that have filled our days since our last visit, and their kind solicitude for our latest news from our friends and family, who, to their minds, inhabit a vague region beyond.

Peanuts abound in this region, and we are hospitably treated to them. The kind old lady puts aside her pipe, and vies with the other members of the family in shelling them for us to eat. While we are thus engaged we

chance to look up and see the mother feeding her child with something she has carefully masticated.

“What! you giving that baby peanuts?” we exclaim. “Surely not.”

“Oh, yes,” she replies, with the utmost unconcern; “he has been eating them for several days.”

Five days old, and has eaten peanuts for several days!

Alas, for our boasted civilization! With Mellin's and Ridge's foods, and the various lactated preparations, each “the only nutritive, healthful, harmless preparation for infant diet,” so guaranteed by the scientific analysis of eminent professors.

Peanuts have stood “the crucial test of experience” in this household, where weak infants have merged into sturdy childhood and strong manhood.

All our fine theories in regard to needful and harmful diet for infants and invalids are

exploded and disproven by the actual practices of this race. Delicate infants eat most indigestible viands, and cholera patients take unripe fruit with apparent impunity.

Having recovered somewhat from our surprise at the extraordinary sight of a nursing infant swallowing peanuts, we lead the family in song and prayer, and conclude our visit.

CHAPTER XV.

A HOME SCHOOL.

Again we turn from the crowded street into the seclusion of a court. It is small and untidy, but we persistently make our way through the pigs and chickens about the door into the hall, and hence to the room at the right.

It does not differ much in general appearance from the majority of Chinese homes. The room is about fifteen by twenty feet, one half of which is occupied by the platform, and the remnant of the space has an earth floor. A paper window renders visible the black, smoky ceiling. The room is not lacking in the characteristic clutter and confusion.

But it presents one very remarkable aspect. Upon the platform are several little girls sitting, all busy studying their books, which teach of the one true God, and the way of salvation through Christ. This

woman who teaches them is an intelligent Christian woman, and a member of the church. These children come from Christian and heathen homes. They are induced to attend by some slight reward. They are also attracted by the songs they are here taught to sing. The walls of the room are decorated with "Come to Jesus," "When He Cometh," "Just as I am," and other standard hymns, written in large Chinese characters. The children learn to sing very creditably. They sing these Christian songs in their heathen homes often, and render the perfect praise ordained of them.

Several home schools have been organized in Christian families, and much good has been accomplished by them. The scholars have, many of them, become "preachers of righteousness" to their heathen parents.

Chinese New Year is a time of national festivity and of especial offerings to the gods. At this season there is a general adjustment of accounts, and they endeavor to balance the

score with heaven by special deeds of merit, such as giving alms, improving the highways, and like acts of private or public benefit. But all debts are not paid at this time, as has sometimes been represented. On the contrary, debts are frequently inherited for generations, like more desirable legacies. Partial payments are made at New Year, and such adjustments as leave the debtor free from the harassing "please remit" of his creditor during the first days of the New Year. At this time, from the Emperor to the beggar, they all devote themselves to the pursuit of pleasure.

The dwellings of all classes are renovated, and garnished with felicitous mottoes written upon red paper. The front doors are decorated with paper pictures of the two tutelary gods who are supposed to ward off evil spirits. Truly they are frightful in appearance. The first ceremony of the New Year is to worship the ancestral tablets and household gods.

One of the little pupils of a home school was told by her mother to buy incense for this ceremony, but she stoutly refused.

“I have learned in my book at school” she said, “that it is vain to worship idols, and that the Lord Jehovah has said, ‘Thou shalt worship the Lord, thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.’”

And these children, perched upon the platform before us, are learning from the books that are open before them of the Way, the Truth, and the Life, of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently.

CHAPTER XVI.

PROSPECTIVE HAPPINESS.

As we left the school we were invited to visit a family in a rear court. Again we contend the narrow pathway with swine and fowl, and pass in to the room indicated.

The old mother smilingly shakes her own hands, after their custom of greeting, and we return the salutation in kind. She turns to clear a place on the platform for us to sit. The remnants of a recent meal are still upon the little table, which stands upon the platform.

This table is about six inches high and three feet square. It is the common style of dining table seen in homes. One is served from a high table, about four feet square, in inns and restaurants.

Amid the rubbish with which the platform is crowded are three covered baskets contain-

ing eggs. The Chinese have, like the Egyptians, from time immemorial practised artificial incubation. Upon the rivers in the South, duck-boats are seen, where they are hatched by artificial heat, and reared for the market. The mode of heating the houses in the North renders the practice of the art very convenient. The brick platforms, that are found in every home, have a flue passing through them, which connects the fire-place with the chimney, so that baskets of eggs placed upon the platform are easily kept at the temperature desired. To be sure the platform serves also as the bed for a numerous family. But with a little more crowding the baskets may be accommodated, and when their dreams are disturbed by the chirp of the chicks, it is time to remove them elsewhere.

The proud grandmother has invited us in to see her four grandchildren. They are grandsons, and are the objects of family pride, selfish interest, and fond affection. They were busy

at play when we entered, but their childish glee was suppressed by sight of us. They demurely advance at the bidding of their grandmother, and make obeisance to the guests. The Chinese are a polite people, and even the children of the poorer classes are taught "the proprieties" of social life, and practise them with ceremonious faithfulness.

The mother of these promising heirs sits on the platform, busily engaged in making shoes for her own tiny feet. The shoes of the upper classes are made of silk or satin, and richly embroidered; but the poorer classes make theirs of cotton. Although silk is produced in China in large quantities, it is not worn by the common people. They are clad in cotton. Red is the favorite color for shoes, but other bright colors are also worn. Mourning is indicated by white shoes.

This daughter-in-law, who is now an obedient servant of her mother-in-law, is, doubtless, often encouraged with the hope of coming

years. Then will she become a mother-in-law to the wives of the young boyhood, who now vex her days with many cares and much work. Then will she be elevated from a menial position to a place of ease and authority. In accordance with Chinese usage, the wives of these sons, in her declining years, will be obliged to render her such service as she is now called to give. Surely a wide divergence from ideas commonly entertained in this country of what is desirable! Here, a mother would hardly regard the prospect with pleasure, and consider it a matter for congratulation that she was to have four daughters-in-law brought home to reside with her!

CHAPTER XVII.

“NO PLACE LIKE HOME”—POVERTY— SMALL-POX.

As we pass out upon the street we are greeted by an invitation to “come in” from a poor, wretched-looking woman with a sickly babe in her arms, who is standing in the gateway of the court of her home. Such a greeting is often heard when passing down the street. It is sometimes but a meaningless compliment. But we heed this invitation, for the air of want and woe which the woman bears excites our sympathy. We long for an opportunity to repeat to her the blessed promise to the weary and heavy-laden — “rest.”

She leads the way into the wretched hovel that is home to her. But is that word always synonymous with “the dearest spot on earth?” As she has gone forth from the smoky, filthy air of her home, out into the glorious sunshine,

and has caught a glimpse, through the gates and screens, of the wealthy official's court across the street, of the lovely flowers and sparkling waters there, that fill the air with perfume and music, and tell of peace and plenty, we think her heart has been stirred by no sentimental longing for the squalid quarters that afford her shelter. The poetic strain, "There is no place like home," finds no echo in the pain of her dull prosaic life.

We make our way through the smoke and sickening odors to a seat. Owing to imperfect draft, and the quality of the fuel, the majority of the houses are filled with smoke when they have any fire. This occasions a great prevalence of eye diseases among the people.

Several squalid little children, who call her mother, crowd about us. We encourage their friendliness by giving them floral picture cards, upon which is written, "Jesus is able to forgive sins." And with this for our text we tell them

of God the Father who "so loved." Poor woman; she has but little comprehension of divine truth. She was never taught to consider any subject until cruel fate thrust upon her untutored mind the painful problem how to exist and furnish food for her famishing little ones, while her husband spent his last cash amid the seductive agonies of the opium den.

But a touch of human kindness wakes her dormant soul, and she says, "Tell me more about Jesus."

And we tell to that weary soul, in that Chinese hovel, the old, old story, slowly, very slowly, that she may take it in.

" Christ, wonderful redemption
And remedy for sin."

As we arise to go, we place one hand upon the sickly infant in her arms and remark, "Your little one seems ill."

" Yes ; she has just been very ill of small-

pox, but she is nearly well now," the mother replies.

"And the other children"—

"Yes, they, too, have had it, but are quite well again," she answers.

We have been sitting a half hour in the room where the family have just had the small-pox. No measures have been taken to disinfect, or even ventilate the house. The bedding and clothing worn during their illness are still in use.

Small-pox prevails in China constantly, and of a malignant type; yet it does not appear to be as contagious as it is usually supposed to be elsewhere. The people never destroy anything because it has come in contact with the disease, and families sleep in the very bedding in which people have died of it. It is in vain to attempt to avoid exposure to it when mingling with the people. The only way to escape contact would be to leave the country.

Vaccination has been introduced among the people, and it is becoming a very popular practice with them. Indeed, when we recall the bitter opposition which it met when introduced into England from the Turks, by Lady Montagu, we wonder at the ready acknowledgment of its benefits by this conservative people, who steadfastly resist most innovations.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CATHOLICS — SLAVERY — THE RICH YOUNG MAN.

Again, a door of the common people is opened to receive us, and we enter a Catholic home.

The Roman Catholics began to propagate their doctrines in China in the thirteenth century. Their first ambassador was Corvino. He is represented by historians as a very saintly man, who gained a large following of the people. Political changes interrupted his work, and the efforts of that church were discontinued for more than two centuries. Their work was resumed by Matteo Ricci in 1582. He was a man of remarkable talents and wonderful diplomacy. He gained the favor of the Emperor, and great influence with many in authority. He published many treatises on mathematics and philosophy, and a few on

religion. He is represented as being more of a politician than theologian. It is recorded of him that "he preached in China the religion of Christ according to his own fancy; that is to say, he disfigured it by a faithful mixture of pagan superstitions, adopting the sacrifices offered to Confucius and ancestors, and teaching the Christians to assist and coöperate at the worship of idols, provided they only addressed their devotions to a cross covered with flowers, or secretly attached to one of the candles which were lighted in the temples of the false gods."

During the first centuries of their work, the representatives of the Roman Church had great influence at court. The great Emperor Kang-hi was, in his youth, under the tutorage of a Jesuit priest. It is stated that the dictionary issued by that Emperor in 1711 contains the characters for Jesus Christ defined as the Son of God.

The influence of this sect at that period was

largely due to the useful arts and sciences which were introduced by the priests. However, a difference of administration among the representatives of this faith concerning the practice of the rites of ancestral worship, and a change in rulers, brought this church into public disfavor, and the missionaries were ordered to leave the country in 1724. Nevertheless, they continued to prosecute their work in secret, until sanctioned by treaty rights in 1858.

The missionaries of the Roman Church in China manifest the same aggressive spirit which characterizes its representatives elsewhere. There are unquestionably devout Christians among its missionaries and converts, yet the same defects and errors prevail in its administration and operations there as are evinced everywhere that its power obtains. Its corner-stone is St. Peter, not Christ, and the structure shows the marks of human priest-craft.

There is great similarity between the rites of the Buddhists and Roman Catholics. So numerous and striking are they that many conjectures have been advanced in regard to their common origin ; and their source variously attributed from St. Thomas to the Devil.

The Chinese converts find it an easy transition from the shrine of Buddha to that of the Virgin Mary ; and all the imagery of the Roman Church ministers to their pagan instincts.

The most of their converts are very exclusive, and have very little intercourse with Protestants. But this family we now visit seems more disposed to follow their own inclinations than the counsels of the priests. Although the full skirts and broad bonnets of the Sisters have but just passed the threshold, we are greeted cordially, in remembrance of medical aid received at our mission hospital.

An image of the Virgin occupies the niche

usually devoted to Buddha. Gay, crude pictures of the Madonna and of the Apostles adorn the walls. A catechism is still open before the woman of the house from which she has just recited to the Sisters. She is a young mother, who has providentially escaped the guardianship of a mother-in-law; and she alone makes a home for her husband and child.

The family consists of these three persons, and a little "ya ton" slave, who is walking about the court with the baby tied to her back, the customary way of carrying infants. Slavery is not a conspicuous feature of Chinese life. There are more girls than boys sold into bondage. They are also pawned and mortgaged, which is practically the same as when sold outright, for they are very seldom, if ever, redeemed. Sometimes children are thus disposed of to cancel gambling debts, or buy opium.

Many of such little girls are found in the

palaces of the rich, where they serve as waiting maids for the ladies. If they are stupid and ill-favored, their lives are spent in bitter drudgery. If pretty and attractive, they are doomed to wretched infamy.

Sometimes girls offered for sale are bought by parents as wives for their sons. The price varies from a few dollars to over a hundred. They are taken to the home of the parents of the future husband to serve the family. Perhaps the little girl in the court is destined to marry the infant perched upon her shoulders, whose babyhood is now her care. Having taken a cup of tea, which to omit to offer a guest would be an overt act of inhospitality, although a visitor may decline without giving offence, we speak of the pictures on the wall, and show in connection a collection of ideal Bible scenes we have with us. They always claim the attention of our listeners, when displayed by way of illustration.

We find this convert of the Catholic Church

familiar with the gospel narratives. She readily recognizes many of the scenes portrayed, especially those illustrating the life of Christ. The shepherds and the wise men suggest the story of the birth of Christ. The virgin mother beside the manger is a scene familiar to her imagination. She sees in the picture of the crucifixion but another representation of a conspicuous decoration of the cathedral where she has been wont to worship.

We then pass to pictures of minor events, and find that she has also been instructed in Christ's ministry.

No parable or miracle ever excites the interest, or claims the attention like the picture of the young man who was very rich. Even five thousand hungry men, besides women and children, would fail to awaken the interest of him "who had great possessions." Another evidence of the "one blood of all nations."

This woman is exceptionally well-taught in certain portions of the Bible. One occasion-

ally meets well-instructed Catholic converts in places where nunneries are located. But the majority of their adherents are nearly as ignorant of divine truth as the pagans about them. And the lives of their followers differ very little from the most benighted heathen. There is a general neglect of the Sabbath among them, and their worship of Catholic images seems but another phase of idolatry.

CHAPTER XIX.

A MOHAMMEDAN HOME.

The home of a wealthy Mohammedan family, in the heart of the city, invites our entrance. We are carried thence in a sedan chair borne by coolies. Through the crowded street they pass with sure and steady tread, amid the bakers, spinners, cobblers, barbers, and forgers, who line the streets, and ply their trade in the open air. We wend our way among the cumbersome carts and awkward wheelbarrows until we reach the gateway that opens into the courts and home of our Mohammedan friends.

As we enter the courts we see artificial ponds, in which gold-fish dart in and out amid the sparkling waters; and others, in which the beautiful lotus is expanding its broad leaves, and pink flowers. Climbing roses and wisteria clamber over trellises and rockeries. Stately

oleanders mingle with dwarfed orange trees, and flowering plants bloom on every hand.

No tutelary gods decorate the gate of this home with their grotesque and awe-inspiring figures. No imagery is seen in a Moham-medan home. No idol shrine finds place where the faith of one true God and his Prophet Mohammed obtains. On the contrary, large scrolls are suspended on the walls having passages from the Koran written upon them. Similar inscriptions decorate the cups containing the tea which their kind hospitality presses upon us.

Not one in thousands of this sect in China can read Arabic, and since it would be sacrilege to translate the Koran, these sealed inscriptions, which ornament the walls and decorate the porcelain, give neither instruction nor enlightenment to the devout possessors.

They piously abstain from pork, and observe fasts and ceremonies with pharisaic faithfulness. They have prepared refreshments for

us to-day, and we are invited to partake, but from which they abstain. This is a fast day, and not until set of sun can they take anything but water.

Several generations are abiding in this enclosure, after the manner of family life in China. The great-grandmother sits in the place of honor amid them all. Her lovely, placid countenance appears to us now, and we see again the winning smile of her sweet mouth, and the tender love of her kindly eyes. Happy the daughters-in-law who come under her gentle reign, we think. "Alas, how few of nature's faces are left alone to gladden us with their beauty."

We contrast with pain that one lovely face of an aged Chinese woman, that it has been our privilege to see, with the scores and hundreds of the haggard, ugly, wrinkled countenances of motherhood and womanhood, upon which we have been called to gaze.

There are lovely infants, beautiful children,

and fair maidens in China. But oh, how quickly the bright eyes, rounded cheeks, and ruddy lips give place to sunken orbs and worn countenances, when every lineament bears evidence of the pain and strife of life's bitter conflict with want and woe. The wretchedness of the poor and misery of the rich conspire to blight and blast the charms of womanhood. So perish her youth and beauty. But amid it all the sunny face of that lovely old lady beams upon us like the glory of the setting sun.

We came here this afternoon in company with the physician, who was called to treat one of the daughters-in-law of this house. Poor thing! That hectic flush on her fair young cheek tells, as in every land and language, that the silver cord will soon be loosed; and those feet that have grown so weak and weary thus early in life's pilgrimage will soon have reached the threshold of the great beyond. What staff has this poor heart

to lean upon in the valley and shadow, whose mists and darkness even now begin to gather about her soul? What consolation does the faith of the Prophet hold for her? What gleam of hope from out the sealed pages of Koran has ever gladdened her heart?

We turn from the meaningless sentences engraved upon the scrolls that adorn the walls of her room, and read in her native language from out the pages of God's truth, the wonderful words of life there recorded for us. We read of Him who captive led captivity, and broke the bars of death, "by whom is brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." As we arise to go, we put into the emaciated outstretched hand a little book of the promises of God.

CHAPTER XX.

A DYING WOMAN.

Just as we pass out into the street, we are met with an importunate invitation to visit a home on a narrow street near by, where a woman is lying very ill. In response we turn our chairs in that direction. We quickly arrive and pass through the crowded doorway into the outer court, and thence into the room indicated, where the patient is.

We see stretched before us a woman about thirty-five years of age. The pallor of death o'erspreads her countenance, and the hand we touch is motionless and cold. It is too late! No human power can give help and healing to that dying woman. After native physicians have tried in vain, as a last resort they invite foreign skill.

This is one of the innumerable instances where missionary physicians are called to wit-

ness the expiring groans of those whom they might have helped had they been granted opportunity for timely treatment.

The family have ceased to expect recovery, and with loud wailing and superstitious fear they await the final scene. Amid the sombre air of grief that pervades, we remark, in painful incongruity, the festive attire of the dying woman. Why is she shrouded in this hour of death in gay robes? Why is the casement of that soul, so soon to be vacated, wrapped in mantles of adorning? Let her rest, poor soul. Peacefully let her fall asleep in the apparel of her sickness. But no! her reception in the other world will depend upon the apparel she has on at death. Are they poor and worn, meagre the honors that await such a soul. Are they rich and elegant, thrice blessed; eager spirits wait to minister to such.

Persons who commit suicide dress themselves in the best they can afford, and the victims of cruel execution are granted by the

government the favor of decent apparel for the occasion. The belief is general that they will wear in the other world the same garments in which they die.

Of all the heathen customs that have come under our observation, nothing has ever filled our heart with such pity and pain as the ghastly practice of making the toilets of the dying. In their ignorance and error they know not, though robed in silk and satin, the soul that is not clothed upon with the white raiment of the righteousness of Christ is miserable, poor and naked.

In the gathering shadows of evening and of death we leave them, with the prayer in our heart that the mantle of eternal charity may be wrapped about that soul, so soon to take its flight.

The doors close upon China's homes. There are haunts of vice and habitations of cruelty that we may not visit; bitterness which no other hearts may know; joy with which no stranger intermeddleth.

Through the mists and darkness of ignorance and idolatry that surround and envelop us, the eye of faith looks forward to the time when family altars to the living God shall be erected all through the vast Empire, and the Holy Bible, in its place of honor, meet the gaze, as the shrine of the household god is now seen; when Christian mothers, in Christian homes, shall gather their children about their knees to teach them the prayer of Christ to the Father of us all; when "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God as the waters cover the sea."

"The dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

THE END.

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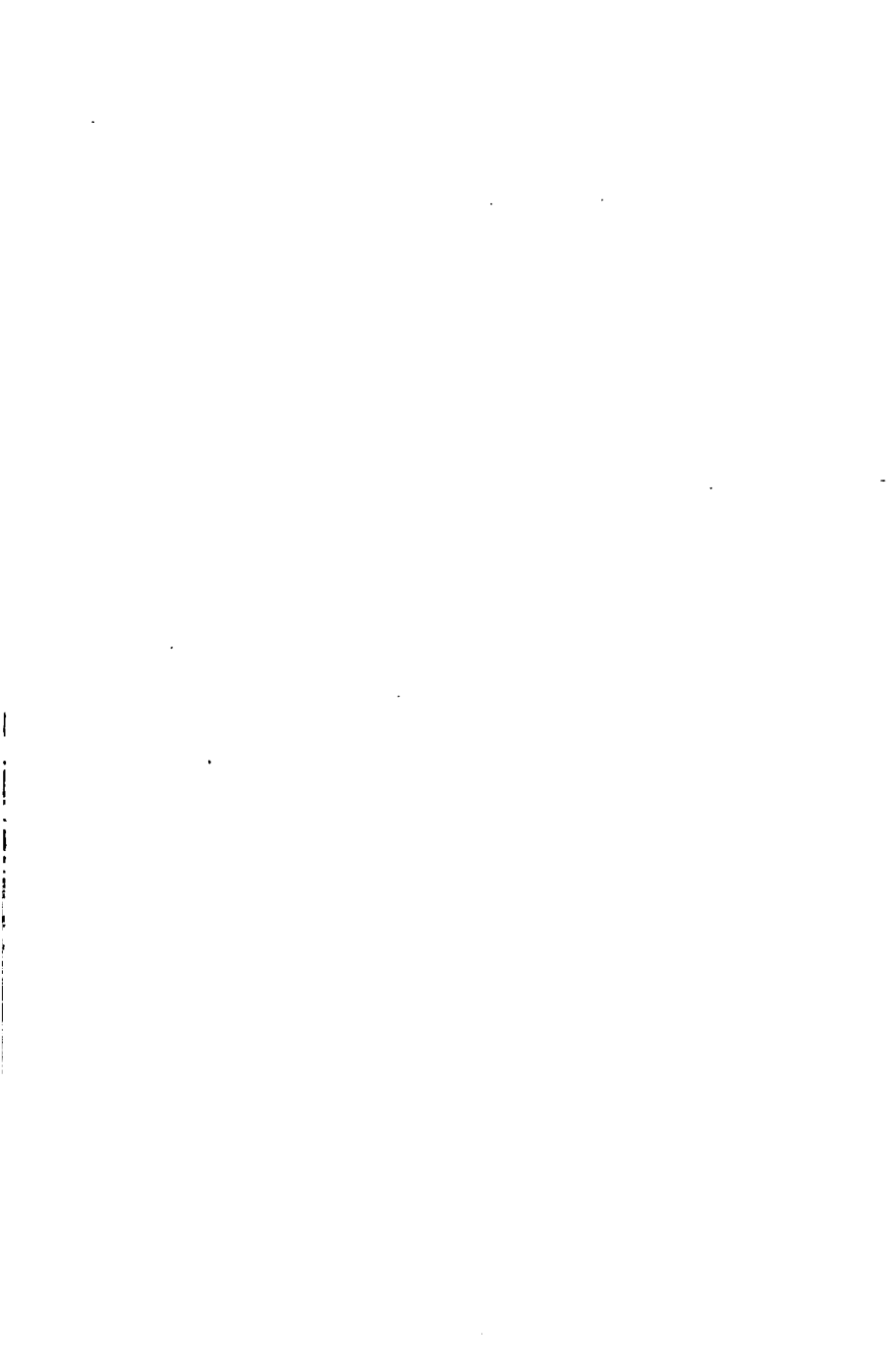
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